FOLLOW UP ON HISTORY OF HIBISCUS:

- Ross H. Gast, Los Angeles, California

While in England last spring, I spent two or three mornings in the library of the Royal Horticultural Society, in an effort to learn more about the history of H. Rosa-Sinensis. Not only did I want to add to my own files, but felt that Association members might like to have a follow up on the history that has been running in the Seed Pod for the past several issues.

However, after going over everything that the library could show me on the subject of our hobby flower, I did not find much that was new; the botanical library at Shaw Gardens, St. Louis, is just as complete. But I did find one publication that I have been looking for "Flora Vitiensis," A description of the plants of the Viti, or Fiji Islands, by Berthod Seamann, published by L. Reeve and Co., London, 1865-73. Apparently, this was the first real study of the flora of the Fiji Islands.

My interest in this publication stems from the fact that while I have seen repeated references to the variety "Fiji White," and have been told that what is known in California as "White Wings", is a native of Fiji, I have never been able to confirm this. And Seamann does not help any, there is no mention of anything remotely resembling "White Wings" in his book.

However, he did arouse my curosity with his comments on another hibiscus that he found in Fiji. This is the H. Storchii, which he named for his assistant, J. Storch. Of this plant, Seamann says: "This is closely allied to H. Rosa-Sinensis, but I think sufficiently distinct to entitle it to the rank of species. I have never seen it cultivated; it is a more straggling schrub than Rosa-Sinensis. The leaves are more elliptical and less deeply cut on the margin the sebments of the calyx are also somewhat differently shaped, and I have never observed a variety with such fine colored pink petals."

This statement is found on page 17; Plate IV shows a color drawing of the variety, which I photographed. But shooting Kodachrome in the window light of London

is difficult. I did get a presentable slide, but not one that would reproduce. This plate shows a light pink flower with a pinkish white throat. The staminal column is quite short and pink in color; the staminal pads small, and dark pink. The anthers are also pink.

It was the foliage that caught my attention. It is almost exactly like that of the variety we call "Floribunda" here in California, although some of the nurserymen presist in also referring to it as "White Wings." This has a white flower, with a touch of pink at the throat, and I had always felt that it was a Kokio hybrid because of its heavily textured, smooth shiney leaves. It is further described as being a dwarf plant.

Hochstreiner listed H. Storchii under Rosa-Sinensis in his "Revision du Genre Hibiscus," published in the "Annuals of Conseratoire Jardin Botanique," Geveve, 1900. (4:23:191) so it is now apparently accepted as a true Rosa-Sinensis. Incidentally, the Hockstreiner paper is in need of translation. It appears to have a great deal of interesting material about the various species of hibiscus, and some member with a mastery of French could do a good deed in translating it for publication in the Seed Pod.

I am asking the director of the Los Angeles County Arboretum to try to get seed or cuttings of H. Storchii from their correspondent in Fiju. Meanwhile, if any of our members knows of this variety, the writer would be glad to hear from them.

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CYTOGENETICIST:

We recently received a very interesting letter from Mr. Donald R. Egolf, Cytogeneticist with the United States National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. His original contact was with our Eric Golby, who referred him to us.

The Arboretum is planning a program aimed toward improving the common Althea (Hibiscus Syriacus), through selection and hybridizing with other members of the genus. The letter included an appeal to our